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PATENT

## **BRACKET WITH INTERCHANGEABLE ORNAMENTAL CROSS BRACE**

### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to a bracket for supporting a shelf from a vertically extending surface, and more particularly, to an angle bracket with an interchangeable ornamental cross brace.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Many known shelf supporting angle brackets are formed in one solid piece. Some brackets are designed to eliminate the need for a cross brace between the outer ends, while other brackets are designed with a fixed cross brace integrally formed with the outer ends. In either case, the known shelf supporting angle brackets provide a static unchangeable ornamental design and appearance. The known brackets require complete removal and replacement of the bracket when the surrounding environment is being redecorated. In addition, the known shelf-supporting angle brackets do not allow temporary changes in ornamental appearance while decorating the surrounding environment for holidays or special occasions.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0003] It would be desirable in the present invention to provide a shelf-supporting angle bracket capable of presenting a variety of ornamental appearances to coincide with the surrounding decor and to allow temporary decoration for holidays and special occasions without requiring complete removal and replacement of the angle bracket member. The present invention includes a bracket for supporting a shelf from a vertically extending surface. An angled member is provided having a first elongate portion engageable with the vertically extending surface allowing the bracket to be supported from the surface, and a second elongate portion engageable with a shelf to be supported. The first elongate portion extends at an angle with respect to the second elongate portion. An elongate interchangeable cross brace extends between the first and second elongate portions. Each of the first and second elongate portions of the angled member can have an aperture formed therein for releasibly receiving outer opposite longitudinal ends of the interchangeable cross brace. The interchangeable cross brace can include a receptacle located between the first and

second longitudinal ends. The receptacle can define a picture frame, or a hollow receptacle of sufficient size to enclose at least one item relating to a special occasion or relating to sports paraphernalia. The interchangeable cross brace can also include ornamental indicia formed thereon relating to one of a holiday, a special occasion, a collegiate logo, or a professional team logo. The elongate interchangeable cross brace can also define a hook for supporting the hanging of another article. The interchangeable cross brace can have an ornamental appearance depicting one of a pumpkin, a football helmet, a soccer ball, a basketball, a baseball, a picture frame, a teddy bear, baby shoes, a container, or a fishing lure. The interchangeable cross brace can be assembled and disassembled with respect to the angled member to provide any desired ornamental appearance or indicia suitable for the surrounding decor or to temporarily decorate the bracket for a holiday or other special occasion.

[0004] Other applications of the present invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art when the following description of the best mode contemplated for practicing the invention is read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] The description herein makes reference to the accompanying drawings wherein like reference numerals refer to like parts throughout the several views, and wherein:

[0006] Fig. 1 is an exploded perspective view of a bracket according to the present invention for supporting a shelf from a vertically extending surface and including an elongate interchangeable cross brace;

[0007] Fig. 2 is a side elevational view of a bracket according to the present invention with an elongate interchangeable cross brace including a receptacle located between first and second longitudinal ends of the cross brace;

[0008] Fig. 3 is a side elevational view of a bracket according to the present invention with an elongate interchangeable cross brace including a teddy bear and indicia spelling "baby";

[0009] Fig. 4 is a side elevational view of a bracket according to the present invention with an elongate interchangeable cross brace including baby shoes and indicia spelling "girl";

[0010] Fig. 5 is a side elevational view of a bracket according to the present invention with an elongate interchangeable cross brace including ornamentation of baby shoes and indicia spelling "boy";

[0011] Fig. 6 is a side elevational view of a bracket according to the present invention with an elongate interchangeable cross brace including a hollow receptacle for receiving one of more items to be displayed, by way of example and not limitation, such as baby shoes having indicia spelling "I ♥ Mommy";

[0012] Fig. 7 is a side elevational view of a bracket according to the present invention including an elongate interchangeable cross brace depicting an ornamental appearance of a pumpkin;

[0013] Fig. 8 is a side elevational view of a bracket according to the present invention including an elongate interchangeable cross brace with an ornamental appearance depicting a football helmet with a professional team logo;

[0014] Fig. 9 is a side elevational view of a bracket according to the present invention including an interchangeable cross brace with an ornamental appearance depicting a baseball;

[0015] Fig. 10 is a side elevational view of a bracket according to the present invention including an elongate interchangeable cross brace with an ornamental appearance depicting a basketball;

[0016] Fig. 11 is a side elevational view of a bracket according to the present invention including an elongate interchangeable cross brace with an ornamental appearance depicting an item related to sports paraphernalia, by way of example and not limitation, such as a soccer ball; and

[0017] Fig. 12 is a side elevational view of a bracket according to the present invention including an elongate interchangeable cross brace with an ornamental appearance depicting a fishing lure.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0018] Referring now to Fig. 1, a bracket 10 according to the present invention is shown in exploded perspective view. The bracket 10 is provided for supporting a shelf 12 from a vertically extending surface 14. The bracket 10 can include an angled member 16 having a first elongate portion 18 engageable with a vertically extending

surface 14 allowing the bracket to be supported from the surface, and a second elongate portion 20 engageable with the shelf 12 to be supported. The first elongate portion 18 extends at an angle with respect to the second elongate portion 20. By way of example and not limitation, the angle can be approximately 90 degrees between a first surface 22 of the first elongate portion 18 engageable with the vertically extending surface 14 with respect to a second surface 24 of the second elongate portion 20 engageable with the shelf 12 to be supported. An elongate interchangeable cross brace 26 extends between the first and second elongate portions, 18 and 20 respectively.

[0019] Each of the first and second elongate portions 18, 20 can have an aperture 28, 30 respectively, formed therein for releasibly receiving opposite longitudinal ends 32, 34 of the interchangeable cross brace 26. The interchangeable cross brace 26 can be releasibly assembled to the angled member 16 by bending the outer ends of the first and second elongate portions 18, 20 away from one another sufficiently to allow insertion of the opposite longitudinal ends 32, 34 of the cross brace 26 into the corresponding apertures 28, 30 formed in the first and second portions 18 and 20. Removal of the bending force from the angled member 16 allows the first and second portions 18 and 20 to resiliently return to an original orientation releasibly holding the opposite longitudinal ends 32, 34 trapped within the apertures 28, 30 of the first and second portions 18 and 20. If desired, the angled member 16 can include stiffening ridges or ribs 36 in order to provide the desired rigidity, resiliency, and flexibility characteristics and/or if desired for ornamental decorative purposes. Fastener-receiving apertures 38 can be formed in one or both of the first and second elongate portions 18, 20 of the angled member 16 in order to secure the bracket 10 to the vertically extending wall surface 14 and/or to connect the bracket 10 to the shelf 12. Alternatively, the shelf can be held in place with respect to the bracket 10 by gravity, or by an outer upwardly extending tab engaging an outer peripheral edge of the shelf (not shown). The first and second elongate portions 18, 20 can include enlarged regions 40, 42 respectively adjacent the outer ends of the angled member 16. The enlarged regions 40, 42 can correspond to the location of the

opposing apertures 28, 30 for receiving the opposite longitudinal ends 32, 34 of the interchangeable cross brace 26.

[0020] The cross brace 26 can include a receptacle 44 located between the first and second longitudinal ends 32, 34 as best seen in Fig. 1 and 2, the receptacle 44 can define a picture frame 46. As best seen in Fig. 6, the receptacle 44 can define a hollow box 48 of sufficient size to enclose at least 1 item relating to a special occasion. By way of example and not limitation, the hollow box 48 can enclose a pair of baby shoes 50. The hollow container 48 can also be of sufficient size and shape to enclose at least one item relating sports paraphernalia. By way of example and not limitation, the sports paraphernalia can include a golf ball, a baseball, a hockey puck, a tennis ball, a badminton birdie, or the like.

[0021] The cross space 26 can include ornamental indicia formed thereon relating to one of a holiday, a special occasion, a collegiate logo, or a professional team logo. By way of example and not limitation, as best seen in Fig. 3, the ornamental indicia can include the letters spelling "Baby", "Girl", "Boy", or the like. By way of example and not limitation, the ornamental indicia for holidays can include "Merry Christmas", "Happy New Year", "Happy Chanukah", "Happy St. Patrick's Day", or the like. The ornamental indicia 52 can include any logo, by way of example and not limitation, high school logos, college logos, university logos, semi-professional team logos, professional team logos, or the like. The cross brace 26 can also include an ornamental appearance 54. By way of example and not limitation, the ornamental appearance can include a pumpkin 56 as illustrated in Fig. 7, a football helmet 58 as illustrated in Fig. 8 which can include a logo 60, a baseball 62 as illustrated in Fig. 9, a basketball 64 as illustrated in Fig. 10, a soccer ball 66 as illustrated in Fig. 11, a teddy bear 68 as illustrated in Fig. 3, baby shoes 70 as illustrated in Fig. 4 or Fig. 5, a container 44 as illustrated in Fig. 6, a picture frame 46 as illustrated in Fig. 1 or 2, or a fishing lure 72 as illustrated in Fig. 12. It should be recognized that other ornamental appearance 54 and/or ornamental indicia 52 can be used in the present invention. In addition, it should be recognized that the ornamental indicia 52 can be used alone, or in combination with the ornamental appearance 54, or the ornamental appearance 54 can be used alone according to the present invention.

The present invention can also include a cross brace 26 defining a hook for supportingly hanging another article. By way of example and not limitation, the hanging article can include a baseball cap, a banner, a pennant, or the like.

[0022] While the invention has been described in connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiment, it is to be understood that the invention is not to be limited to the disclosed embodiments but, on the contrary, is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the appended claims, which scope is to be accorded the broadest interpretation so as to encompass all such modifications and equivalent structures as is permitted under the law.